

UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 319 093 (13) A

(43) Date of A Publication 13.05.1998

(21) Application No 9716576.5

(22) Date of Filing 05.08.1997

(30) Priority Data

(31) 96052665

(32) 07.11.1996

(33) KR

96053173

09.11.1996

97004280

11.02.1997

(71) Applicant(s)

LG Electronics Inc

(Incorporated in the Republic of Korea)

20 Yoido-Dong, Youngdungpo-Gu, Seoul,
Republic of Korea

(72) Inventor(s)

Joung Won Woo

Kyeong Jin Kim

Soon Bum Kwon

Ki Hyuk Yoon

Young Seok Choi

Jong Hyun Kim

Jin Hee Jung

(51) INT CL⁶

G02F 1/1337

(52) UK CL (Edition P)

G2F FCT F24T F25F

(56) Documents Cited

GB 2309794 A

GB 2309793 A

GB 2301447 A

(58) Field of Search

UK CL (Edition O) G2F FCT

INT CL⁶ G02F 1/1337

ONLINE:EDOC WPI JAPIO INSPEC

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service

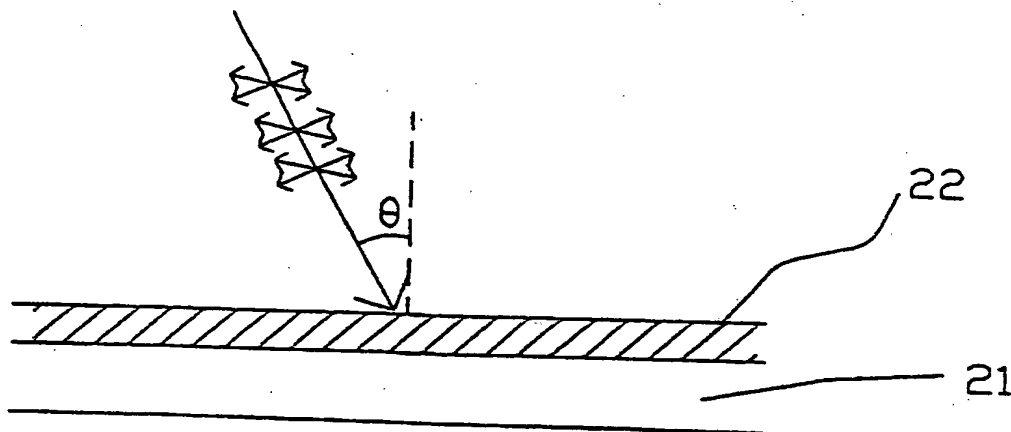
Edward Evans & Co

Chancery House, 53-64 Chancery Lane, LONDON,
WC2A 1SD, United Kingdom

(54) Fabricating a liquid crystal cell

(57) A method of producing an alignment layer for a liquid crystal device by directing light onto a light sensitive layer 22 where the light is directed obliquely onto the layer and the light is unpolarised or is elliptically polarised. Certain portions of the light sensitive layer may be exposed while others are masked thereby producing an alignment layer in which the pretilt angle differs on different parts of the alignment layer. There is also disclosed an alignment layer in which the pre-tilt is dependent on the orientation direction of the alignment layer.

FIG:7a



GB 2 319 093 A

FIG. 1

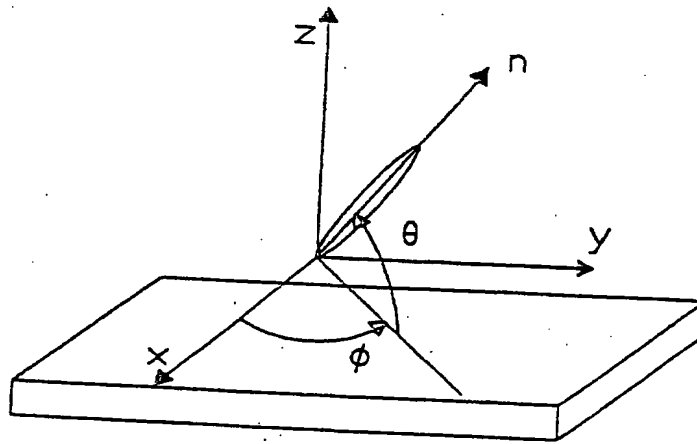


FIG.2a
PRIOR ART

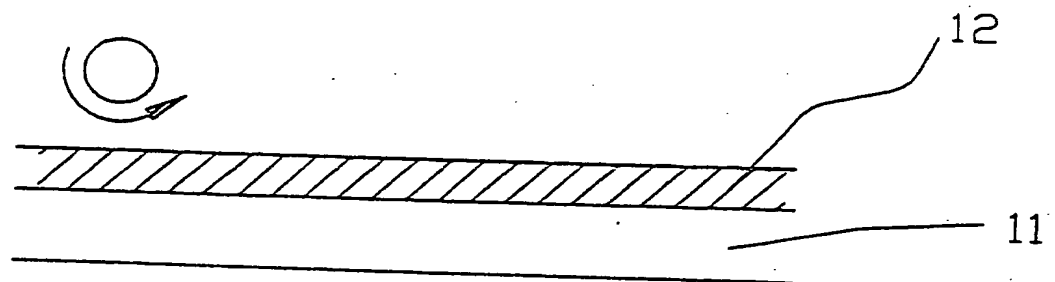


FIG.2b
PRIOR ART

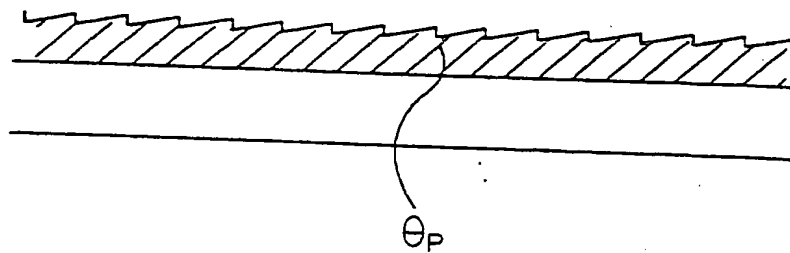


FIG.3a
PRIOR ART

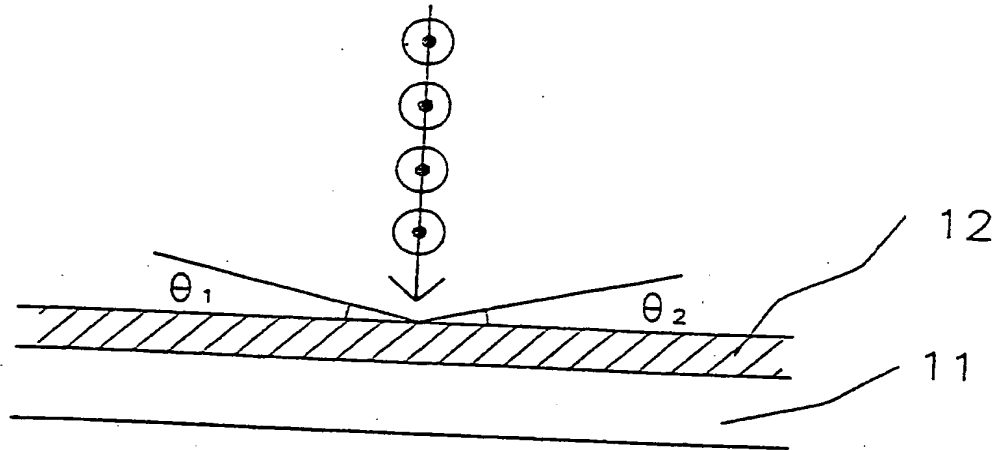


FIG.3b
PRIOR ART

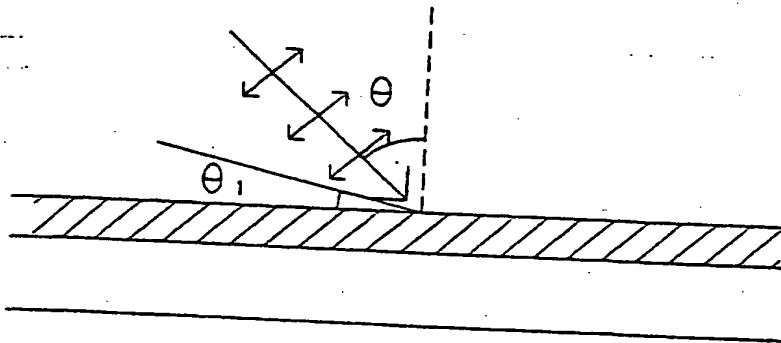


FIG.3c
PRIOR ART

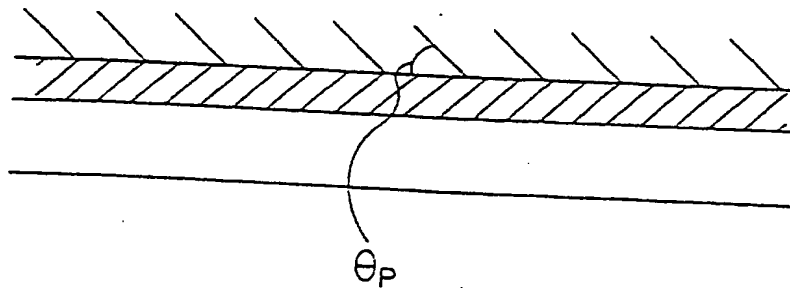


FIG.4a

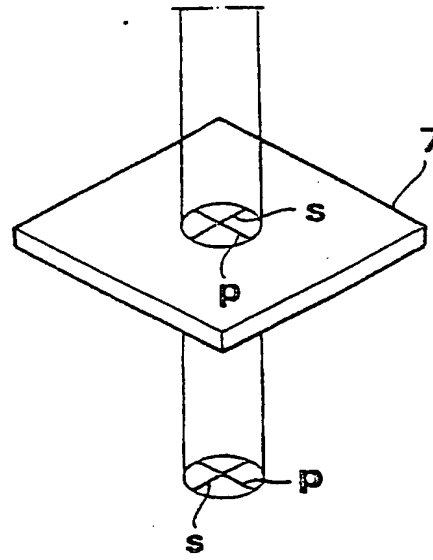


FIG.4b

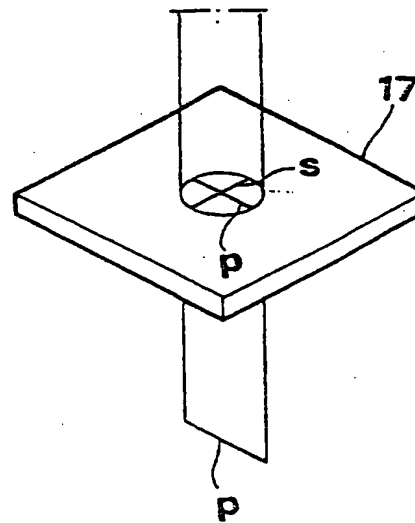
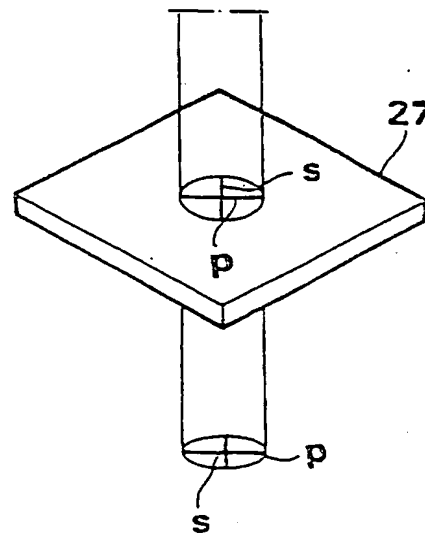


FIG.4b



6/20

FIG.5b

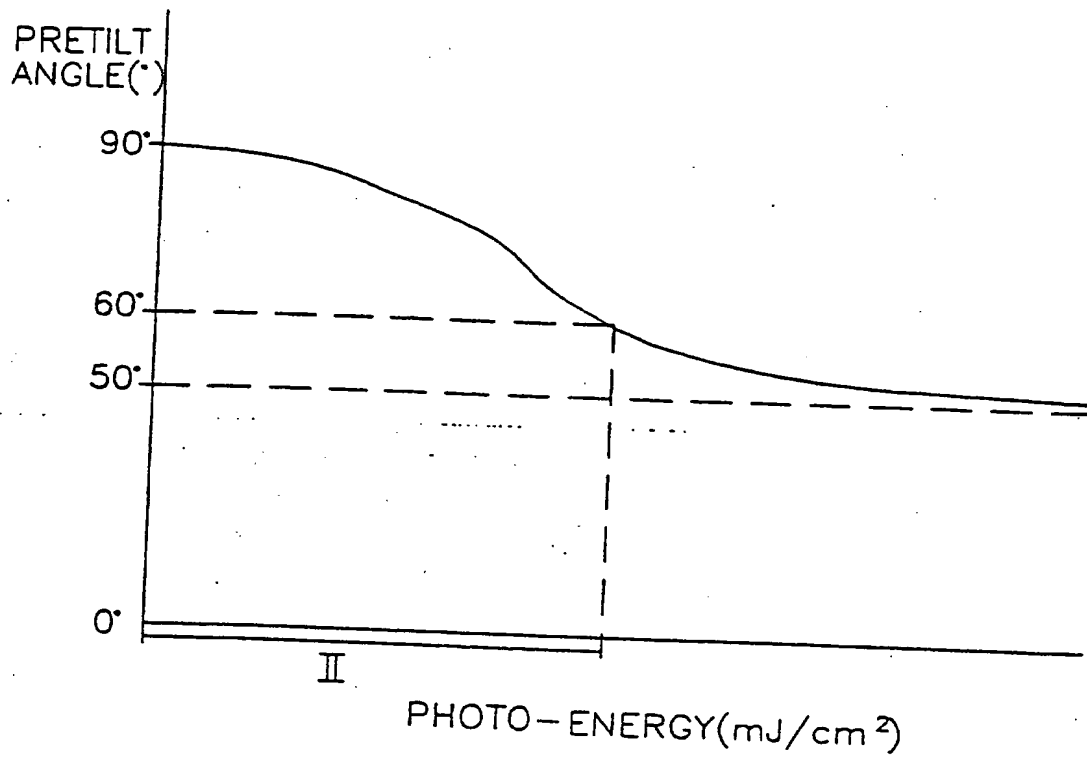


FIG. 6a

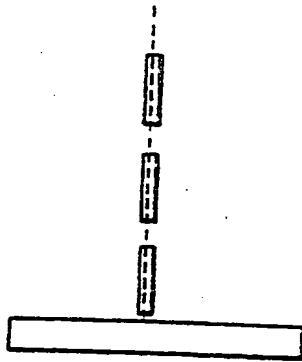


FIG. 6b

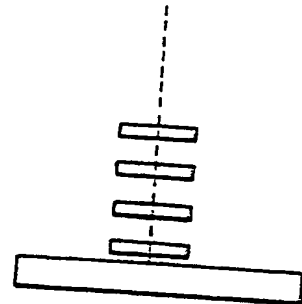


FIG. 6c

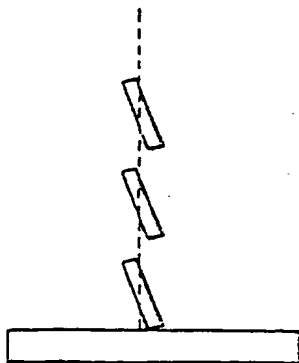


FIG. 7a

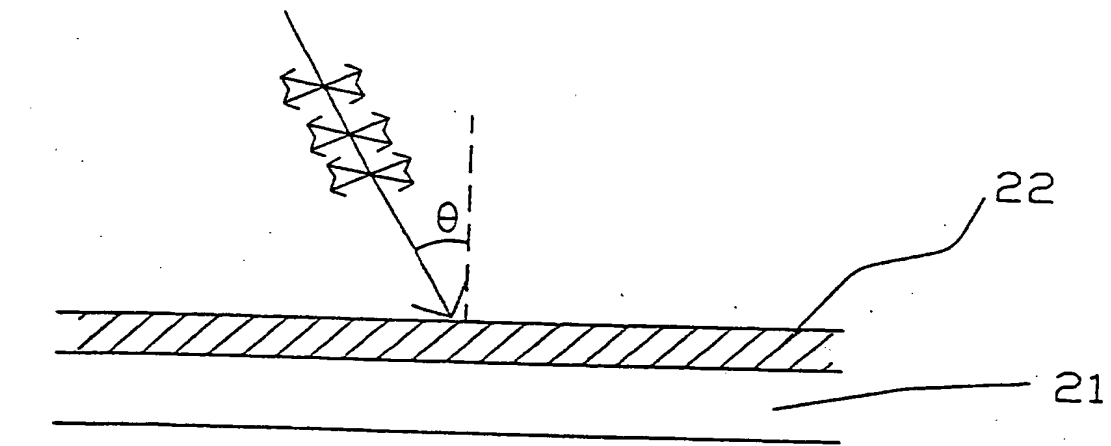


FIG. 7b

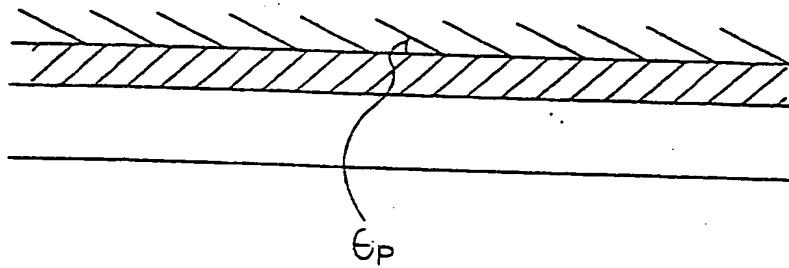


FIG. 8a

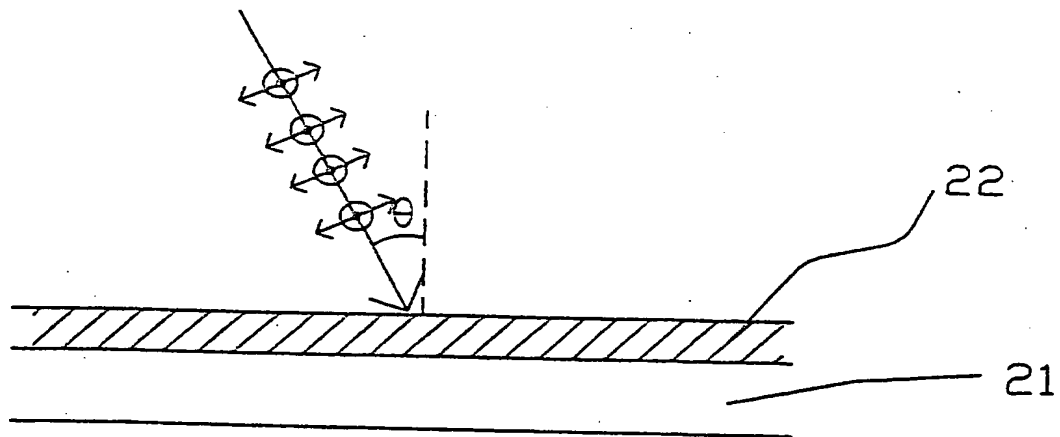


FIG. 8b

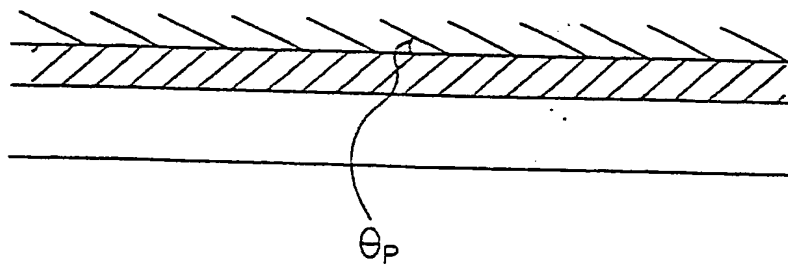


FIG.9

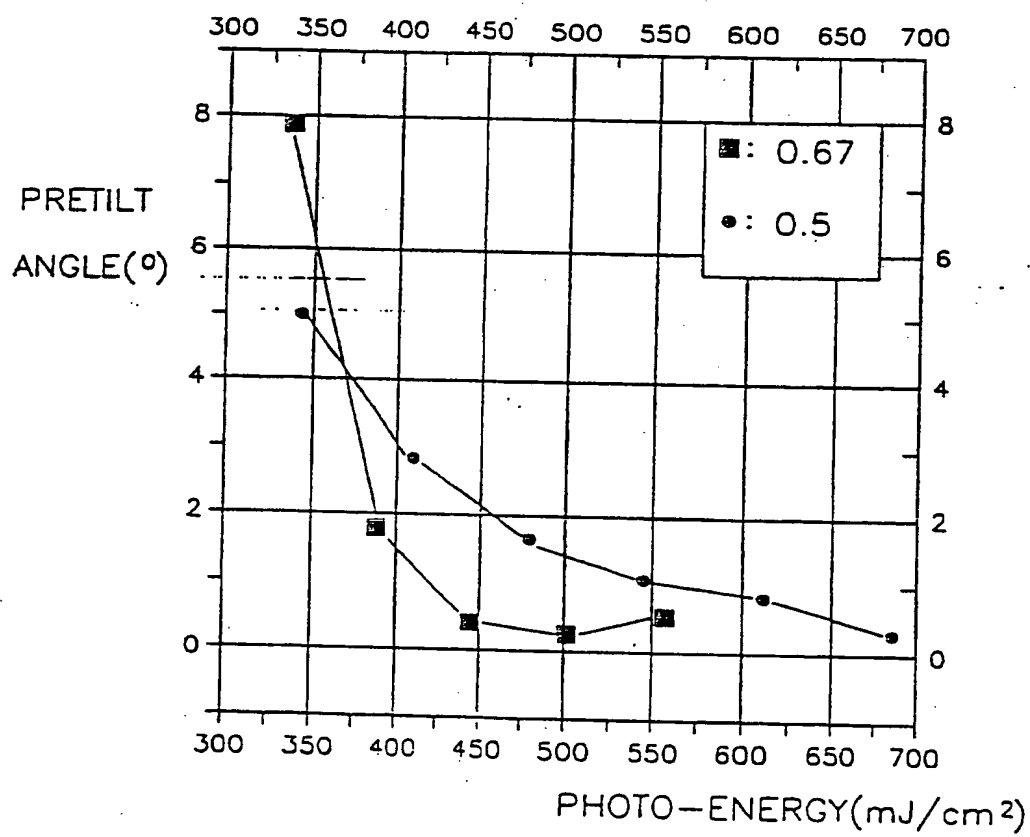


FIG. 10a

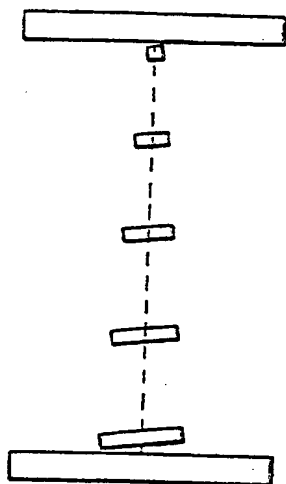


FIG. 10b

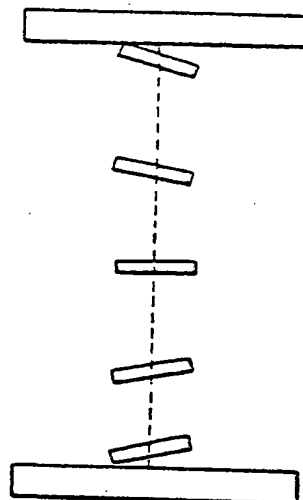


FIG. 10c

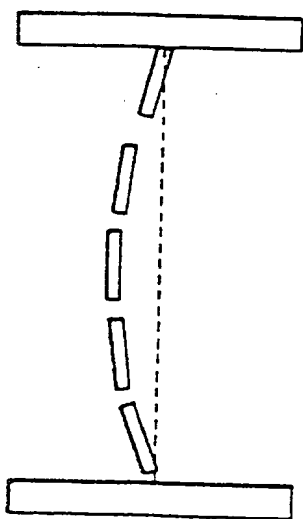


FIG. 10d

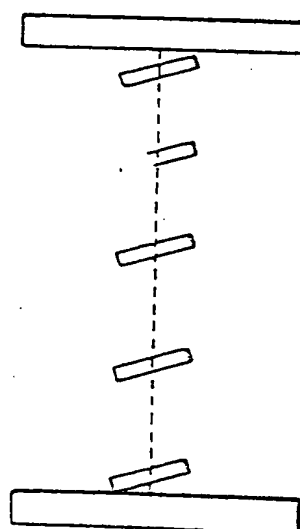


FIG. 10e

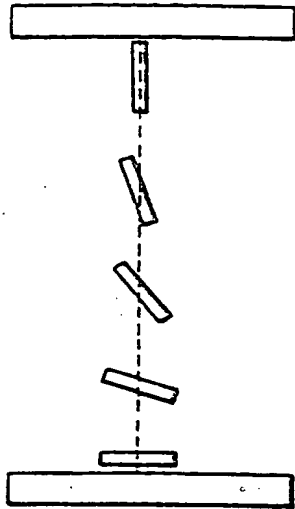


FIG. 11a

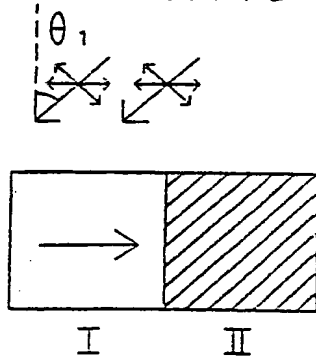


FIG. 11b

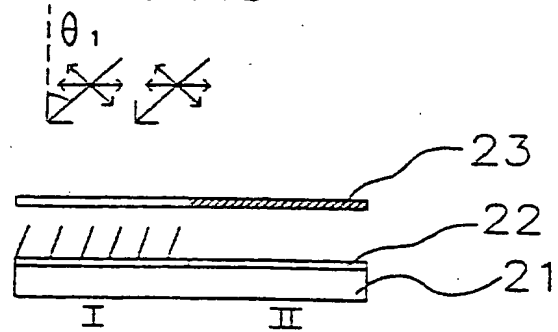


FIG. 11c

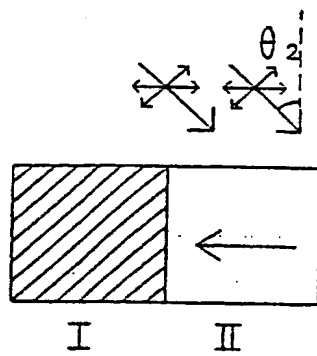


FIG. 11d

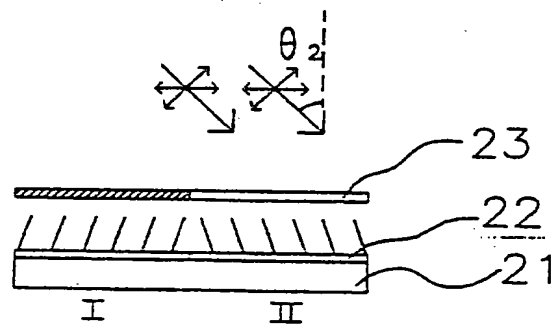


FIG. 11e

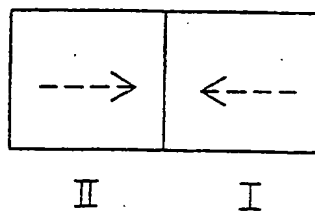


FIG. 11f

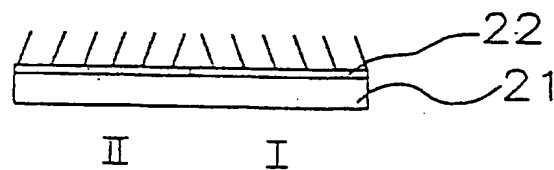


FIG. 11g

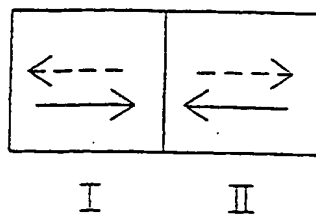


FIG. 11h

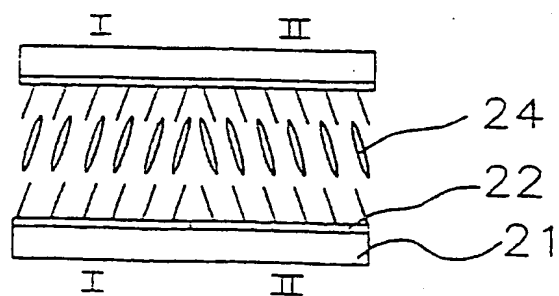


FIG. 12a

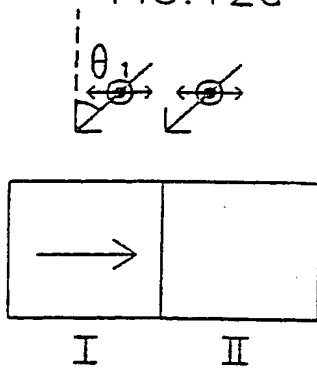


FIG. 12b

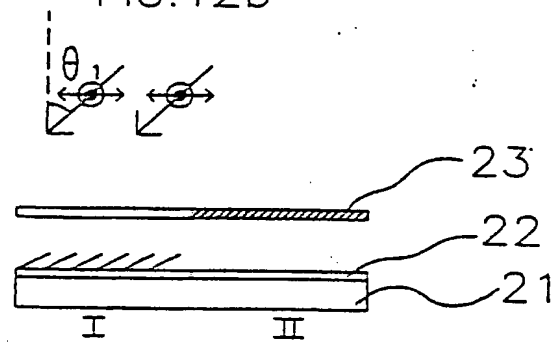


FIG. 12c

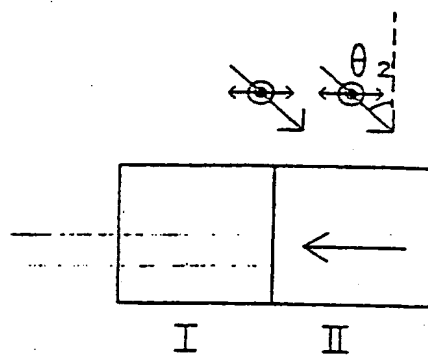


FIG. 12d

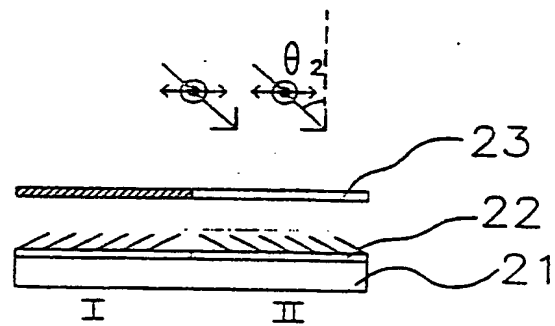


FIG. 12e

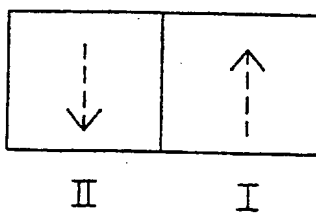


FIG. 12f

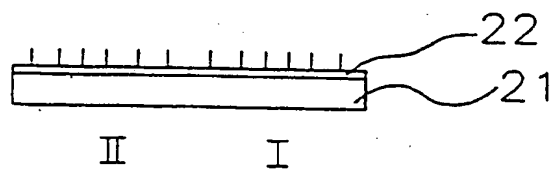


FIG. 12g

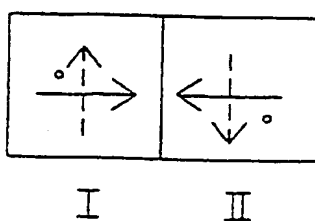


FIG. 12h

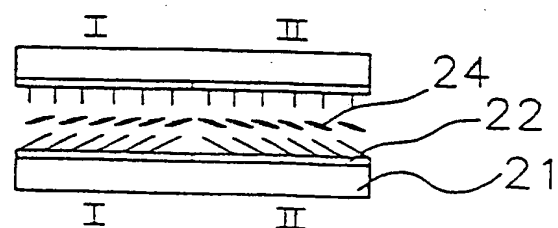


FIG. 13a

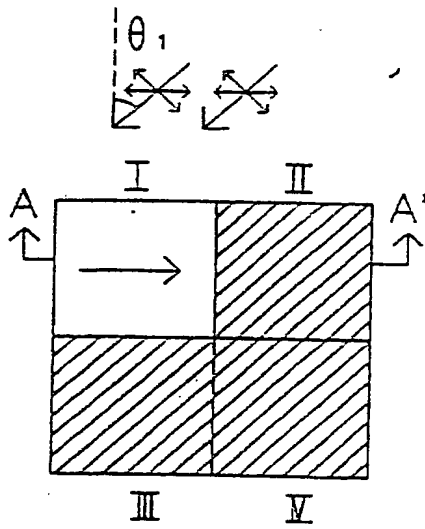


FIG. 13b

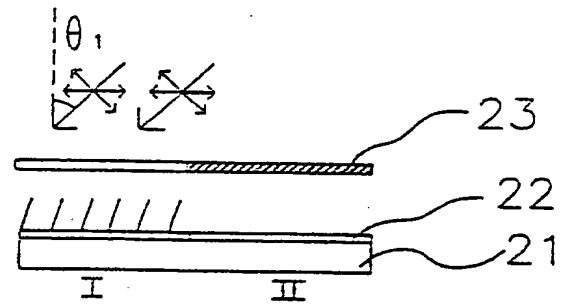


FIG. 13c

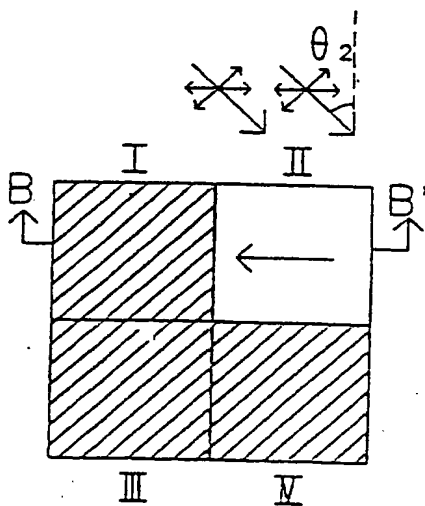


FIG. 13d

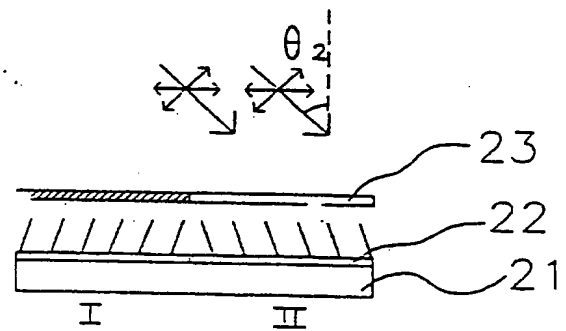


FIG.13e

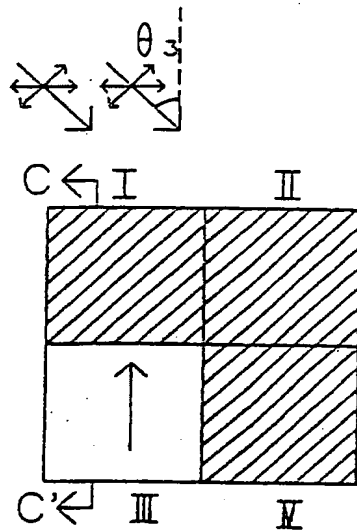


FIG.13f

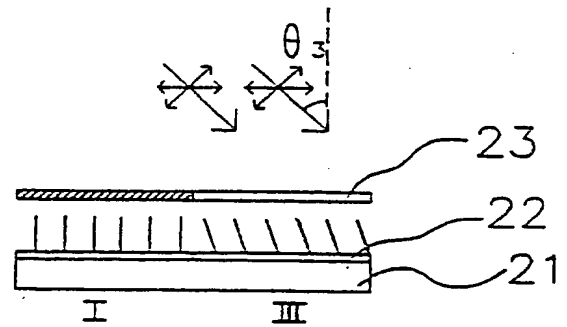


FIG.13g

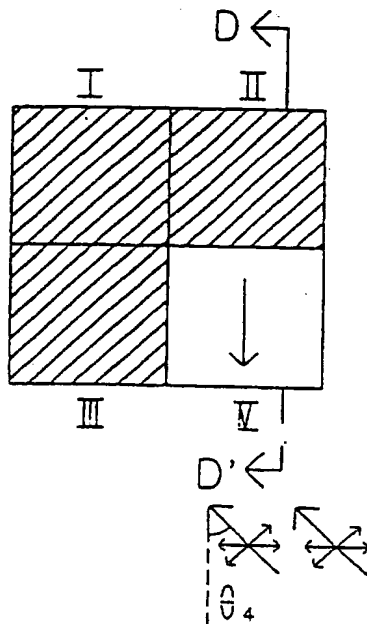


FIG.13h

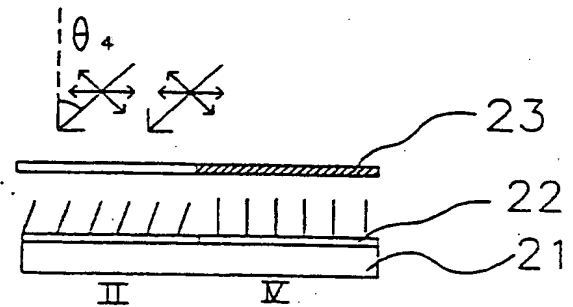


FIG. 13i

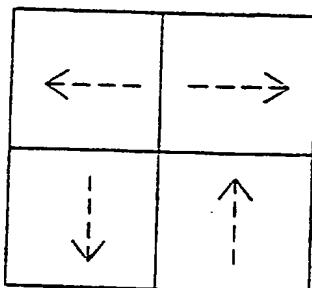


FIG. 13j

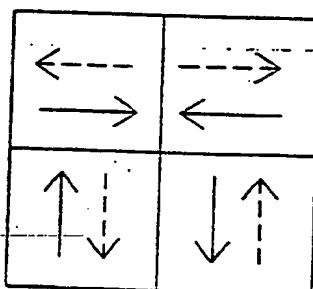


FIG.14a

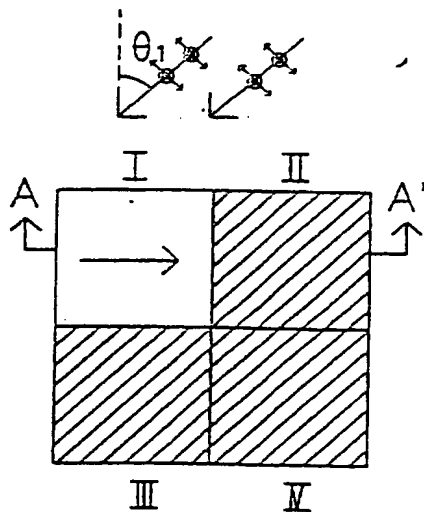


FIG.14b

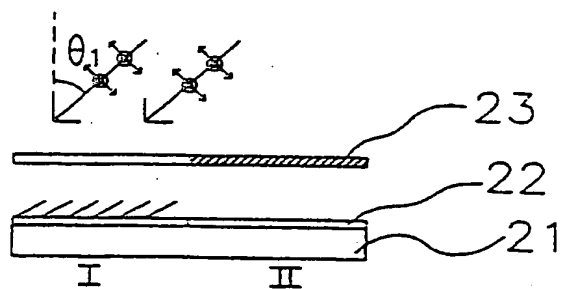


FIG.14c

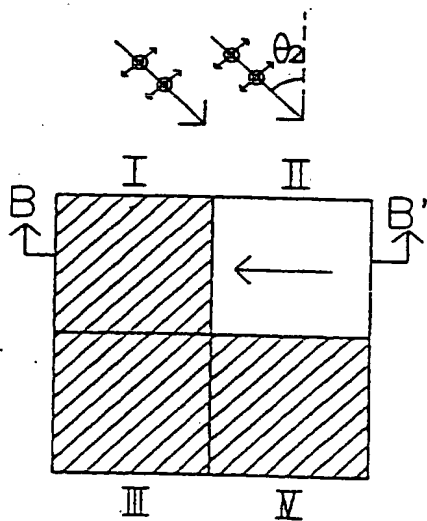


FIG.14d

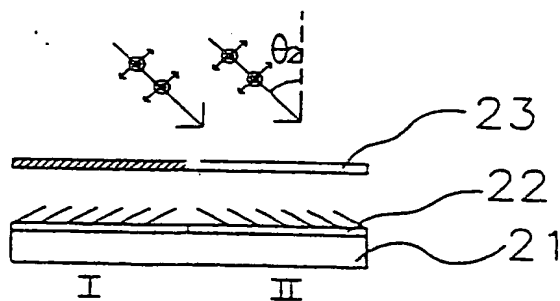


FIG. 14e

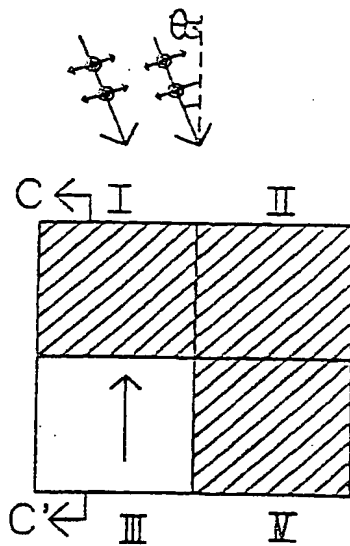


FIG. 14f

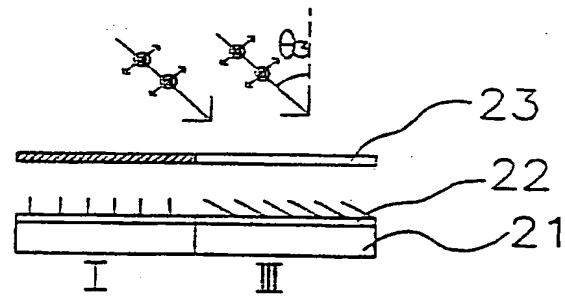


FIG. 14g

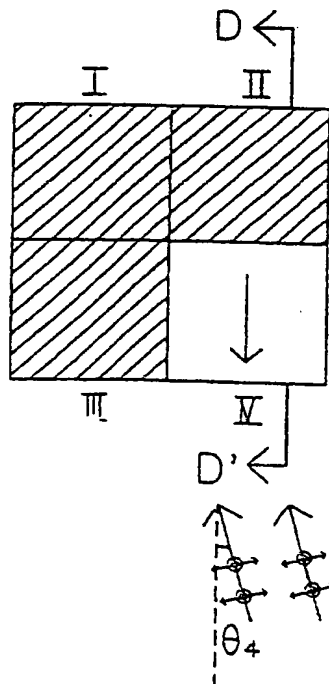


FIG. 14h

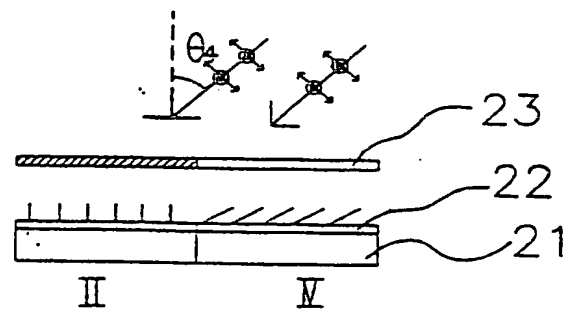


FIG. 14i

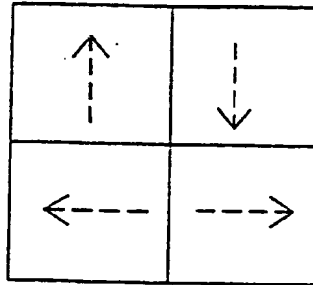
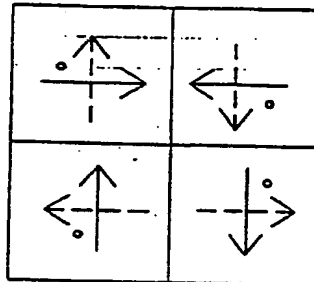


FIG. 14j



20/PRTS

09/890553
JC05 Rec'd PCT/PTO 0 2 AUG 2001
2319093

1

A METHOD FOR FABRICATING A LIQUID CRYSTAL CELL

5 The present invention relates to a method for fabricating a liquid crystal cell, and more particularly to a method for fabricating a liquid crystal cell in which the liquid crystal molecules are aligned by irradiating light.

10 Generally, a liquid crystal cell comprises two substrates and liquid crystal materials injected between these substrates, the liquid crystal materials comprising anisotropic molecules. It is necessary to orderly align liquid crystal molecules in the cell in order to obtain
15 a uniform brightness and the high contrast ratio in the liquid crystal cell. Therefore, some treatment on the substrate is carried out to provide orderly alignment of liquid crystal molecules. In FIG.1, the director of liquid crystal molecule n is determined by a pretilt angle θ which corresponds to a polar angle of the director n and a pretilt angle direction ϕ which
20 corresponds its azimuthal angle. The Cartesian coordinate of the director n of liquid crystal molecule is defined:
$$n = (\cos\theta\cos\phi, \cos\theta\sin\phi, \sin\theta).$$

25 The director n of liquid crystal is determined

by controlling the pretilt angle θ and the pretilt angle direction ϕ by carrying out alignment process on the substrate. In this specification, the director n is substituted with a pretilt defining a pretilt angle and pretilt angle direction.

A conventional alignment process is the rubbing method demonstrated in FIG.2. The rubbing process comprises following steps: coating a substrate 11 with an alignment layer 12 such as polyimide; and mechanically rubbing the alignment layer(FIG.2a). Thereby, microgrooves with pretilt θ , are formed on rubbed surface of the alignment layer(FIG.2b). The liquid crystal molecules are thus uniformly aligned due to the intermolecular interaction between the polyimide molecules and the liquid crystal molecules.

In the above described rubbing process, however, defects are formed in the microgrooves which cause light scattering and random phase distortion. Also during the rubbing process, dust particles and electrostatic discharges are generated on the alignment layer, so that the substrate is damaged and yield is decreased.

To solve the aforementioned problems, the photo-alignment method has been recently introduced. The conventional photo-alignment method is illustrated in

FIG.3. In this method, double exposure of linearly polarized light is necessary to determine a pretilt. FIG.3a shows the first irradiation process in which linearly polarized ultraviolet light is vertically irradiated into an alignment layer 12. When polymers are irradiated with the light having the polarized direction \odot parallel with side chains of the polymers, cross-linking is generated between the side chains belonging different polymers. The reacted polymer becomes symmetric due to the side chains as well as the main chains of the polymer; the main chains are arranged in the perpendicular direction to the polarized direction \odot of light. Thereby, two pretilt directions θ_1 , θ_2 are determined in the perpendicular direction to the polarized direction \odot of the light as shown FIG. 3a. However, the formed pretilt angle is small, typically less than 0.11° , and one pretilt direction is to be selected, so a second exposure must be carried out as shown in FIG.3b.

The second irradiation process is shown in FIG.3b. The linearly polarized light having a polarized direction \perp perpendicular to the first polarized direction \odot , is irradiated into the alignment layer 12 in the oblique direction θ relative to the normal line of

alignment layer 12. Thereby, one pretilt angle direction θ_1 is selected and the pretilt angle is enlarged according to the oblique angle between the substrate 11 and incident direction of the second ultraviolet light. For example, when the oblique angle is 45° , the pretilt angle is set 0.26° .

The photo-alignment method has several advantages over rubbing. For example, it can prevent the defects of rubbing such as a light scattering and random phase distortion. Also during the alignment process, dust particles and electrostatic discharges are not generated in the alignment layer, so that the substrate is not damaged.

The conventional photo-alignment method, however, is complicated due to double-exposure. In addition, the range of controllable pretilt angle by the second ultraviolet light is very limited, for example, 0.15° when the oblique angle is 30° , 0.26° when the oblique angle is 45° , 0.30° when the oblique angle is 60° .

→ An object of the present invention is to provide a photo-alignment method in which the process is

simple and applicable to various modes of liquid crystal cells by controlling the pretilt angle in all ranges of 0°- 90°.

5 Another object of the present invention is to provide a method for fabricating a liquid crystal cell which has a wider viewing angle.

10 In order to achieve these and other objects, a method, as embodied defined herein, comprises providing an alignment layer, preferably of a photosensitive material, on a substrate; and exposing the alignment layer to unpolarized or partially polarized light in an oblique direction with respect to the alignment layer, to provide pretilt for the molecules of the alignment layer.

15 It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary and explanatory only and are not restrictive of the invention, as claimed.

For a better understanding of the invention, embodiments will now be described by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG.1 illustrates a liquid crystal director in Cartesian coordinates.

FIGs.2a to 2b illustrate a conventional rubbing alignment process.

FIGs.3a to 3c illustrate a conventional photo-alignment process.

FIGs.4a to 4c show the polarized characteristics of light.

FIGs.5a to 5b show the relationship between pretilt angle and photo-energy in the siloxane materials.

FIGs.6a to FIG.6c show various alignment modes capable of being provided by an alignment process according to the invention.

FIGs 7a to 7b illustrate an alignment process according to this invention.

FIGs 8a to 8b illustrate another alignment process according to this invention.

FIG.9 shows the relationship between pretilt angle and photo-energy according to the polarization degree.

FIGs.10a to 10e show various liquid crystal modes capable of being provided by fabricating process according to the invent.

FIGs.11a to 11h illustrate a process of

fabricating a multi-domain liquid crystal cell.

FIGs.12a to 12h show another process of fabricating a multi-domain liquid crystal cell.

5 FIGs.13a to 13j show yet another process of fabricating a multi-domain liquid crystal cell.

FIGs.14a to 14j show yet another process of fabricating a multi-domain liquid crystal cell.

Wherever possible, the same reference number will be used throughout the drawings to refer to the same or like parts.

Further, the direction of the pretilt of the liquid crystal molecules in each of the four domains may be substantially perpendicular to that of at least one adjacent ones of the four domains.

FIG.4 is a schematic showing the characteristic of light according to the intensity of each electromagnetic wave in the P and S directions. In the figure, the P-direction and S-direction are used to illustrate the relative intensity of each light. The P-

direction and S-direction are perpendicular to one another.

Unpolarized light in this specification is defined as a collection of omnidirected electromagnetic waves oscillating in all directions, so that it has electromagnetic waves oriented in every direction except the incident direction. FIG.4a shows unpolarized light transmitting through a transparent plate 7 which pass all incident electromagnetic waves. The unpolarized light has the equivalent intensities in the P and S directions, or, in other words, the unpolarized light is constituted of omnioriented electromagnetic waves.

On the other hand, the polarized light is defined as a collection of unidirected oscillating electromagnetic waves FIG.4b demonstrates polarized light transmitting through a polarizer 17 which allows only electromagnetic waves directed parallel to the transmissive axis of the polarizer 17 to pass. Therefore, the polarized light includes only unidirected electromagnetic waves.

Finally, partially polarized light is defined in this specification as light having an elliptically shaped intensity in which a principal intensity is stronger than other intensities. In other words, the intensity of the principal electromagnetic wave P is strongest, and the

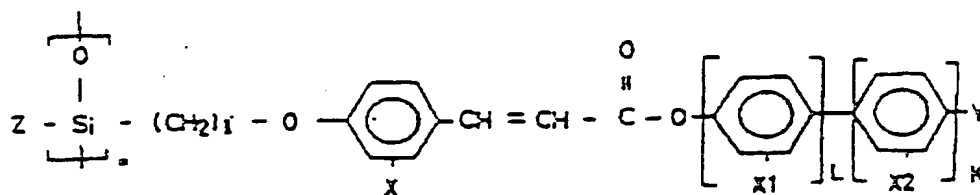
subordinate electromagnetic wave S oriented perpendicular to the principal electromagnetic wave is weakest. FIG.4c illustrates partially polarized light transmitting through a partially polarizing plate 27 which allows the intensity of waves parallel to the principal transmission axis to pass unimpeded, but partially blocks the intensity of waves oriented in other direction.

Therefore, the partially polarized light is comprised of a principle intensity P and a subordinate intensity S smaller than principal intensity P.

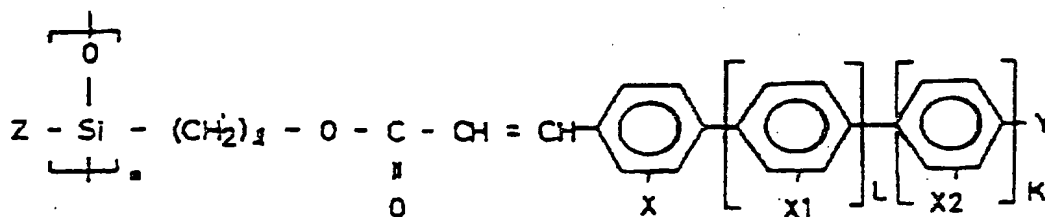
This invention utilizes unpolarized and partially polarized light to align liquid crystal molecules injected into the liquid crystal cell. To align the liquid crystal molecules, an alignment layer or photoreactive layer should be coated on the substrates constituting the liquid crystal. According to this invention, the alignment layer includes light sensitive (photosensitive) material which is readily aligned in the direction perpendicular to the polarized direction of the incident light. In this manner, the pretilt angle directions are determined in the directions perpendicular to the polarized direction of the incident light. In addition, the materials have a pretilt forming characteristics controllable in entire range of 0-90 degrees.

The photosensitive material of this invention includes the oligomer and a polymer of siloxane cinnamates having following structure formulas.

polysiloxane cinnamate I :



polysiloxane cinnamate II :



Z = OH, CH₃, or mixtures thereof,

m = 10-100,

l = 1-11,

L = 0 or 1,

K = 0 or 1,

X, X₁, X₂, Y = H, F, Cl, CN, CF₃, C_nH_{2n+1} or OC_nH_{2n+1} wherein n can be from 1 to 10, or mixtures thereof.

The pretilt angle forming characteristics of these materials is shown in FIGs.5a and FIG.5b. FIG.5a

shows pretilt angle forming characteristics of siloxane polymers. The material has a pretilt angle of 90 degree without providing any photo-energy. By irradiating with light, the pretilt angle is slowly decreased, in the range I, down to 60° . The pretilt angle is more rapidly decreased down to about 10° by increasing photo-irradiation energy between range II and range I, and then is slowly decreased in range II.

FIG.5b shows pretilt angle forming characteristics of siloxane oligomers. The material has a pretilt angle of 90 degrees without providing any photo-energy. By irradiating with light, the pretilt angle is slowly decreased in the range II, down to about 60° , and then continues to be decreased to about 50° with increasing photo-irradiation energy. By using these materials as an alignment layer, the pretilt angle can be easily controlled through a broad range.

Therefore, the various alignment modes are formed as shown in FIG.6. FIG.6a shows a homogeneous alignment mode having a pretilt angle less than 10° , FIG.6b shows a homeotropic alignment mode having a pretilt angle greater than 60° . In addition, a tilted alignment mode having a pretilt angle between 10° and 60° can be produced as illustrated in FIG.6c.

The alignment method of present invention can be adopted to all kinds of liquid crystal cells by controlling the various pretilt angles as described above.

5 One alignment method of this invention is illustrated in FIG.7. In this embodiment, unpolarized light having an omnidirected electromagnetic wave is utilized to provide a pretilt by single exposure. This light has electromagnetic waves oscillating in all
10 directions except the incident direction; therefore, cross linking is not generated in the incident direction. In FIG.7a the unpolarized light is irradiated onto an alignment layer 22 formed with siloxane materials with an angle h from normal line of the alignment layer. Thereby,
15 the pretilt angle direction is selected in the direction of the incident light, and pretilt angle is controlled by the photo-energy of the light. As shown in FIG.7b, one pretilt h_p is provided on the alignment layer.

20 To save the photo-energy, the preferred mode of liquid crystal cell is a homeotropic alignment mode. To achieve this mode, the range II of photo-energy is applied to alignment layer when the alignment layer is formed with siloxane polymers as shown in FIG.5a. Similarly, when the siloxane oligomers is used for

alignment layer as shown in FIG.5b, the range II of photo-energy is applied. In this embodiment, a polarizer polarizing a light can be excluded in the irradiating device. Also, because the alignment process is completed in a single exposure, rearranging of the irradiating device is not necessary. Therefore, the process is simple due to single exposure, and is more energy efficiency.

Another alignment method of this invention is illustrated in FIG.8. In this embodiment, partially polarized light having subordinate electromagnetic wave components as well as a principal electromagnetic wave component is utilized to provide a pretilt by single exposure. In this method, the subordinate components perpendicular to principal components serve to select a pretilt angle direction. The principal components provide the pretilt angle direction axis. In FIG.8a, the partially polarized light is irradiated onto the alignment layer 22 formed with siloxane materials with an angle h from normal line of the alignment layer. In this manner, two pretilt angle directions are determined in the direction perpendicular to the principal direction. At the same time, subordinate components select one pretilt angle direction in the incident direction h . The pretilt angle is also controlled by the photo-energy

of the light. As shown in FIG.8b, one pretilt h_p is provided on the alignment layer.

5 A stable alignment by principal components can be achieved. Therefore, this process can be adopted to the homogeneous mode as well as the homeotropic mode.

In addition, the pretilt angle sharpness depends upon the degree of polarization of partially polarized light as shown in FIG.9

10 By adopting the alignment processes discussed above, various modes of liquid crystal cells of FIG.10 may be produced depending the configuration between the first pretilt of first alignment layer and the second pretilt of second alignment layer facing the first alignment layer.

15 FIG.10a illustrates a TN mode liquid crystal cell in which a pretilt angle direction of one alignment layer is perpendicular to a pretilt angle direction of the other alignment layer. FIG.10b and FIG.10c illustrate a spray mode and a bend mode liquid crystal cell,
20 respectively. In these modes, a pretilt angle direction of one alignment layer is antiparallel with a pretilt angle direction of the other alignment layer. FIG.10d illustrates an ECB mode liquid crystal cell in which the pretilt angle direction of one alignment layer is

parallel with a pretilt angle direction of the other alignment layer. Finally, FIG.10e shows a hybrid mode liquid crystal cell having one alignment layer aligned in a homeotropic mode and the other alignment layer aligned in a homogeneous mode.

A mono-domain liquid crystal cell has a problem of the viewing angle dependency. To overcome this and other problems, this invention provides a fabricating method of multi-domain liquid crystal cells shown in FIG.11 through FIG 14.

FIG.11 demonstrates one embodiment of this invention which provides a multi-domain ECB mode liquid crystal cell aligned parallel between two substrates 21 and has a pretilt angle greater than 60° . FIG.11a shows a method for providing a first pretilt on a first domain I on the alignment layer 22. The first unpolarized light is obliquely irradiated in the angle h_1 into the substrate 21 coated with alignment layer 22 of siloxane polymers while being blocked from the second domain II in FIG.11a and FIG.11b, the cross-sectional view of the FIG.11a, so as to provide a first pretilt on the first domain I. The first pretilt is defined with a first pretilt angle being larger than 60° relative to the substrate and a pretilt angle direction oriented to the

incident light direction.

FIG.11c and FIG.11d show the method for providing a second pretilt on a second domain II on the alignment layer 22. To get the second pretilt, the mask 23 is moved to the first domain I. The second unpolarized light is obliquely irradiated with the angle h_2 into the alignment layer 22 while being blocked from the first domain I, so as to provide a second pretilt on the second domain II.

A second substrate 21 is coated with alignment layer 22 and provided with the first pretilt and the second pretilt on the first domain and the second domain, respectively, as shown in FIG.11e. The pretilts are tilted toward each other on the alignment layer 22 as shown in FIG.11f, the cross sectional view of FIG.11e.

A liquid crystal panel is then obtained by assembling the two substrates 21 for an ECB mode liquid crystal cell. Liquid crystal materials 24 are injected into the liquid crystal panel having two domains, then liquid crystal molecules 24 are vertically aligned between two substrates 21. At the same time, the molecules in one domain are aligned parallel to the column of the cell cross-section, but in the row, the molecules of liquid crystal materials are aligned in the different directions according to domains as shown in

FIG.11g and FIG.11h.

In this manner, the viewing angle is compensated by aligning the liquid crystal molecules according to domains so as to get a wider viewing angle liquid crystal cell. Further, the direction of the second pretilt may be substantially perpendicular to that of the first pretilt.

In this embodiment, the photo-irradiation energy is selected so that said first pretilt and said second pretilt are set to be greater than 60° , or more preferably, $75^\circ - 89^\circ$. That is, when the siloxane based materials are used as the alignment layer, the range "II" of photo-energy is applied to get a pretilt angle greater than 60° , as shown in FIG.5a and FIG.5b. Thus the large pretilt angle is easily provided for the ECB mode liquid crystal cell by adopting this alignment process.

FIGs.12a to 12h show another embodiment of this invention which provide a multi-domain TN mode liquid crystal cell which is aligned twistedly between two substrates and has a pretilt angle less than 10° . FIG.12a shows the method for providing a first pretilt on a first domain I on the alignment layer 22. The first partially polarized light is obliquely irradiated in the angle h_1 into alignment layer 22 of siloxane polymer while being blocked from the second domain II in FIG.12a and FIG.12b,

so as to provide a first pretilt on the first domain I. The first pretilt is defined with a first pretilt angle being less than 10° relative to the substrate 21 and a pretilt angle direction oriented to the incident light direction. FIG.12c and FIG.12d show the method for providing a second pretilt on a second domain II on the alignment layer 22. To get the second pretilt, the mask 23 is moved to the first domain I. The second unpolarized light is obliquely irradiated with the angle h_2 into the alignment layer 22 while being blocked from the first domain I, so as to provide a second pretilt on the second domain II.

The second substrate 21 is coated with alignment layer 22 and provided with the first pretilt and the second pretilt on the first domain and the second domain, respectively, as shown in FIG.12e. The pretilts are tilted in planes parallel to one another on the alignment layer 22 as shown in FIG.12f, the cross sectional view of FIG.12e.

Then, a liquid crystal panel can be obtained by assembling said two substrates 21 for TN mode liquid crystal cell. Liquid crystal materials 24 are injected into the liquid crystal panel having two domains, then liquid crystal molecules 24 are horizontally aligned

between two substrates 21. At the same time, the molecules in one domain are twistedly aligned in the column of the cell cross-section, but in the row, the molecules of liquid crystal materials are aligned in different direction according to domains as shown in FIG.12g and FIG.12h.

Thereby, the viewing angle is compensated by aligning the liquid crystal molecules according to their domains so as to get a wider viewing angle liquid crystal cell. Further, the direction of the second pretilt may be substantially perpendicular to that of the first pretilt.

In this embodiment, the photo-irradiation energy is selected so that the first pretilt and the second pretilt are set to be less than 10° . That is, when the siloxane based materials are used as the alignment layer, the range "I" of photo-energy is applied to get a pretilt angle greater than 10° , as shown in FIG.5a.

Thus, the stable pretilt alignment axis is easily provided by principal wave of the partially polarized light. In addition, the pretilt angle sensitivity is controlled by the degree of polarization of partially polarized light as shown in FIG.9.

FIG.13 illustrates a process for fabricating a

four-domain ECB mode liquid crystal cell which produces a wider viewing angle than two-domain ECB mode cell. In FIG.13a and FIG.13b, the cross-sectional view of FIG.13a, the first unpolarized light is obliquely irradiated in the angle h_1 into the substrate 21 coated with alignment layer 22 of siloxane polymer materials while being blocked from the second, third and fourth domains II, III, IV, so as to determine the first pretilt on the first domain I, the pretilt having angle larger than 60° . To get the second pretilt having angle larger than 60° , the second unpolarized light is obliquely irradiated in the angle h_2 into the substrate 21 while being blocked from the first, third and fourth domains I, III, IV as shown in FIG.13c and FIG.13d. To get the third and fourth pretilt having pretilt angle larger than 60° , as shown in FIG.13e, FIG.13f, FIG.13g and FIG.13h, a third unpolarized light and a fourth unpolarized light are obliquely irradiated a third domain III and a fourth domain IV, respectively, while being blocked from other domains. In FIG.13i, after removing the mask, the first substrate having four domains for a liquid crystal panel is obtained.

The above photo-alignment process is carried out on another second substrate 21 and a liquid crystal panel

is obtained by assembling the two substrates 21. Liquid crystal materials are injected into the liquid crystal panel having four domains, then liquid crystal molecules are vertically aligned. At the same time, molecules are aligned parallel to the column of the cell cross-section, but in the row, the molecules of liquid crystal materials are aligned in the different directions between domains as shown in FIG.13j.

Thereby, the viewing angle is compensated by aligning the liquid crystal molecules according to their domains so as to get a wider viewing angle liquid crystal cell. Further, the direction of the pretilt of the liquid crystal molecules in each of the four domains may be substantially perpendicular to that of at least one of adjacent ones of the four domains.

In this embodiment, the photo-irradiation energy for providing first pretilt angle, second pretilt angle, third pretilt angle and fourth pretilt angle is selected in the range II of FIG.5a or FIG.5b, so that the pretilt angle is larger than 60° , and more preferable, greater than 75° but less than 89° .

The present invention provides a method of fabricating an ECB mode liquid crystal cell which can be obtained in short time by the photo-alignment process.

Moreover, it can provide a multi-domain ECB mode liquid crystal cell by changing the incident direction of the photo-irradiation. Thus, the ECB mode cell having a wider viewing angle, a higher contrast ratio and a more stable grey scale is easily fabricated by the photo-alignment process of this invention. The large pretilt angle for the ECB mode is readily provided by adopting an alignment layer of this invention. Therefore, a photo-alignment process is completed in a shorter time so that total tact time is shorter than conventional method.

FIG.14a through FIG.14j show a process for fabricating a four-domain TN mode liquid crystal cell having a wider viewing angle than a two-domain TN mode cell. In FIG.14a and FIG.14b, the cross-sectional view of FIG.14a, the first partially polarized light is obliquely irradiated in the angle h_1 into the substrate 21 coated with alignment layer 22 of siloxane polymer materials while being blocked from the second, third and fourth domains II, III, IV, so as to determine the first pretilt on the first domain I, the pretilt having angle less than 10° . To get the second pretilt having angle less than 10° , the second partially polarized light is obliquely irradiated in the angle h_2 into the substrate 21 while being blocked from the first, third and fourth domains

I, III, IV as shown in FIG.14c and FIG.14d. To get the third and fourth pretilts having pretilt angle less than 10° , as shown in FIG.14e, FIG.14f, FIG.14g and FIG.14h, a third partially polarized light and a fourth partially polarized light are obliquely irradiated a third domain III and a fourth domain IV, respectively, while being blocked from other domains. Therefore, the first substrate 21 having four domains for a liquid crystal panel can be produced.

The above photo-alignment process is carried out on another substrate 21 to prepare the second substrate as shown in FIG.14i.

After assembling the two substrates 21, liquid crystal materials are injected into the liquid crystal panel having four domains, then liquid crystal molecules are horizontally aligned. At the same time, molecules are twistedly aligned in the column of the cell cross-section, but in the row, the molecules of liquid crystal materials are aligned in the different directions between domains as shown in FIG.14j.

Thereby, the viewing angle is compensated by aligning the liquid crystal molecules according to their domains so as to get a wider viewing angle liquid crystal cell. Further, the direction of the pretilt of the liquid

crystal molecules in each of the four domains may be substantially perpendicular to that of at least one of adjacent ones of the four domains.

5 In this embodiment, the photo-irradiation energy for providing first pretilt angle, second pretilt angle, third pretilt angle and fourth pretilt angle is set up in range I of FIG.5a, so that the pretilt angle is less than 10° .

10 Thus, a stable pretilt alignment axis is easily provided by principal wave of the partially polarized light. In addition, the pretilt angle sensitivity is controlled by the degree of polarization of partially polarized light as shown in FIG.9.

15 Therefore, a photo-alignment process is completed in the shorter time so that total tact time is shorter than conventional methods. In each of the above embodiments of the invention, the liquid crystal material may include a positive or negative dielectric anisotropy.

20 Other embodiments of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art from consideration of the specification and practice of the invention disclosed herein. It is intended that the specification and examples be considered as exemplary only, with a true

scope and spirit of the invention being indicated by the following claims.

5

10

15

20

25

CLAIMS

1. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device, comprising the steps of:

5 providing an alignment layer on a substrate, said alignment layer having an orientation having an axis perpendicular to an oscillating direction of an electromagnetic wave; and

10 exposing said alignment layer to light obliquely incident onto a surface of said alignment layer.

2. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 1, wherein said alignment layer includes a siloxane based polymer.

15 3. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 1, wherein said alignment layer includes a siloxane based oligomer.

4. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 1, 2 or 3, further comprising the step of providing a liquid crystal material adjacent the alignment layer.

25 5. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal

device in accordance with claim 1, 2, 3 or 4, wherein said exposing step comprises the steps of:

5 exposing a first portion of the alignment layer to said light obliquely incident onto the surface of alignment layer; and

10 exposing a second portion of the alignment layer to said light obliquely incident onto the surface of alignment layer, said first and second portions being different from one another.

6. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 1, 2, 3 or 4, wherein said exposing step comprises the steps of:

15 exposing a first portion of the alignment layer to said light obliquely incident onto the surface of alignment layer while preventing a second portion of the alignment layer from being exposed to said light, said second portion being different than the first portion; and

20 exposing said second portion of alignment layer to said light obliquely incident onto the surface of the alignment layer while preventing said first portion from being exposed to said light.

25 7. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal

device in accordance with claim 1, 2, 3 or 4, wherein said exposing step comprises the steps of exposing a first portion of the alignment layer to said light obliquely incident onto the surface of the alignment layer while preventing a
5 second, third and fourth portions of the alignment layer from being exposed to said light, said first, second, third and fourth portions being different from one another;

10 exposing said second portion of the alignment layer to said light while preventing the first, third, and fourth portions of the alignment layer from being exposed to said light;

15 exposing said third portion of the alignment layer to said light while preventing the first, second, and fourth portions of the alignment layer from being exposed to said light; and

20 exposing said fourth portion of the alignment layer to said light while preventing the first, second, and third portions of the alignment layer from being exposed to said light.

8. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, wherein said light includes ultraviolet light.

9. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 4, or any one of claims 5 to 8 when dependent on claim 4, wherein the liquid crystal material has a pretilt angle greater than 60° .
10. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 4, or any one of claims 5 to 8 when dependent on claim 4, wherein the liquid crystal material has a pretilt angle less than 10° .
11. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 4, or any one of claims 5 to 10 when dependent on claim 4, wherein the liquid crystal material includes a negative dielectric anisotropy.
12. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 4, or any one of claims 5 to 10 when dependent on claim 4, wherein the liquid crystal material includes a positive dielectric anisotropy.
13. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 5, or claims 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12 when dependent on claim 5, further comprising providing a liquid crystal material adjacent each of said exposed first and second portions of the alignment layer, the liquid crystal material adjacent the first portion of the alignment layer having a first pretilt and the liquid crystal materials adjacent the second portion of alignment layer having a second pretilt different than said first pretilt.
14. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 5, or claims 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12 when dependent on

claim 5, further comprising the step of providing a liquid crystal materials adjacent a respective one of said exposed first and second portions of the alignment layer, the liquid crystal material adjacent the first portion of the alignment layer having a first pretilt and the liquid crystal material adjacent the second portion of the alignment layer having a second pretilt substantially perpendicular to said first pretilt.

15. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 5, or any one of claims 8 to 14 when dependent on claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

exposing a third portion of the alignment layer to said light obliquely incident onto the surface of the alignment layer; and

exposing a fourth portion of the alignment layer to said light obliquely incident onto the surface of the alignment layer, said first, second, third and fourth portion being different from one another.

16. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 15, further comprising providing a liquid crystal materials adjacent each of said exposed first, second, third and fourth portions of the alignment layer, the liquid crystal molecules adjacent one of the first, second, third and fourth portions of the alignment layer having a pretilt angle direction different than the pretilt angle direction of the liquid crystal material adjacent at least one of another of the first, second, third and fourth portions of the alignment layer.

17. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 15, further comprising providing a liquid crystal materials adjacent each of said exposed first, second, third and fourth portions of the alignment layer, the liquid crystal material adjacent one of the first, second, third and fourth portions of the alignment layer having a pretilt angle direction substantially perpendicular to the pretilt angle direction of the liquid crystal material adjacent at least one of another of the first, second, third and fourth portions of alignment layer.

18. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device, comprising the steps of:

providing an photoreactive layer on a substrate;
and

5 exposing said photoreactive layer to unpolarized light obliquely incident onto a surface of the photoreactive layer.

19. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal
10 device in accordance with claim 18, wherein the photoreactive layer includes a siloxane based polymer.

20. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal
15 device in accordance with claim 18, wherein the photoreactive layer includes a siloxane based oligomer.

21. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal
20 device in accordance with claim 18, 19 or 20, further comprising the step of exposing the photoreactive layer to polarized light.

22. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal
25 device in accordance with claim 18, 19, 20 or 21, further comprising providing a liquid crystal material adjacent the photoreactive layer.

23. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 18, 19, 20, 21 or 22, wherein said unpolarized light includes ultraviolet light.

5 24. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 or 23, wherein said exposing step comprises the steps of:

exposing a first portion of the photoreactive layer to said unpolarized light; and

10 exposing a second portion of the photoreactive layer to said unpolarized light, said first and second portions being different from one another.

25. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with any of claims 18 to 23, wherein said exposing step comprises the steps of:

15 exposing a first portion of the photoreactive layer to said unpolarized light while preventing a second portion of the photoreactive layer from being exposed to said unpolarized light, said first and second portions being different from the one another; and

20 exposing said second portion of the photoreactive layer to said unpolarized light while preventing said first portion of the photoreactive layer from being exposed to said unpolarized light.

25

26. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with any one of claims 18 to 23, wherein said exposing step comprises the steps of:

5 exposing a first portion of the photoreactive layer to said unpolarized light while preventing a second, third, and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer from being exposed to said unpolarized light, said first, second, third and fourth portions different from one another;

10 exposing said second portion of the photoreactive layer to said unpolarized light while preventing the first, third, and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer from being exposed to said unpolarized light;

15 exposing said third portion of the photoreactive layer to said unpolarized light while preventing the first, second, and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer from being exposed to said unpolarized light; and

20 exposing said fourth portion of the photoreactive layer to said unpolarized light while preventing the first, second, and third portions of the photoreactive layer from being exposed to said unpolarized light.

27. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with any one of claims 21 to 26, wherein said
25 unpolarized light is incident at an angle substantially

perpendicular to the surface of the photoreactive layer.

28. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 22, or any one of claims 23 to 27 when dependent on claim 22, wherein the liquid crystal material has a pretilt angle greater than 60°.

29. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 22, or any one of claims 23 to 27 when dependent on claim 22, wherein the liquid crystal material has a pretilt angle less than 10°.

30. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 22, or any one of claims 23 to 29 when dependent on claim 22, wherein the liquid crystal material includes a negative dielectric anisotropy.

31. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 22, or any one of claims 23 to 29 when dependent on claim 22, wherein the liquid crystal material includes a positive dielectric anisotropy.

32. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 24, or any one of claims 27 to 31 when dependent on claim 24, further comprising providing a liquid crystal material adjacent each of said exposed first and second portions of the photoreactive layer, the liquid crystal material adjacent the first pretilt and the liquid crystal material adjacent the second portion of the photoreactive layer having a second pretilt different from said first pretilt.

33. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 24, or any one of claims 27 to 31 when dependent on claim 24, further comprising providing a liquid crystal materials adjacent each of said exposed first and second portions of the photoreactive layer, the liquid crystal material adjacent the first portion of the photoreactive layer having a first pretilt and the liquid crystal material adjacent the second portion of the photoreactive layer having a second pretilt substantially perpendicular to said first pretilt.

34. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 24, or any one of claims 27 to 33 when dependent on claim 24, further comprising the steps of:

exposing a third portion of the photoreactive layer to said unpolarized light; and

exposing a fourth portion of the photoreactive layer to said unpolarized light, said first, second, third and fourth portions being different from one another.

35. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 34, further comprising providing a liquid crystal material adjacent each of said exposed first, second, third and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer, the liquid crystal material adjacent one of the first, second, third and fourth portions of photoreactive layer having a pretilt angle direction different than the pretilt angle direction of the liquid crystal material adjacent at least one of another of the first, second, third and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer.

36. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 34, further comprising providing a liquid crystal material adjacent each of said exposed first, second, third and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer, the liquid crystal material adjacent one of the first, second, third and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer having a pretilt angle direction substantially perpendicular to the pretilt angle direction of the liquid crystal material adjacent at least one of another of the first, second, third and fourth portion of the photoreactive layer.

37. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal

display device, comprising the steps of:

providing an photoreactive layer on a substrate;

and

5 exposing said photoreactive layer with partially
polarized light obliquely incident onto a surface of said
photoreactive layer.

10 38. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal
device in accordance with claim 37, wherein the
photoreactive layer includes a siloxane based polymer.

15 39. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal
device in accordance with claim 37, wherein the
photoreactive layer includes a siloxane based oligomer.

20 40. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal
device in accordance with claim 37, 38 or 39, further comprising
providing a liquid crystal material adjacent the
photoreactive layer.

41. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal
device in accordance with claim 37, 38, 39 or 40, wherein the partially
polarized light includes ultraviolet light.

25 42. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal

device in accordance with claim 37, 38, 39, 40 or 41, wherein said exposing step comprises the steps of:

exposing a first portion of the photoreactive layer to said partially polarized light; and

5 exposing a second portion of the photoreactive layer to said partially polarized light, said first and second portions being different from one another.

43. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal
10 device in accordance with claim 37, 38, 39, 40 or 41, wherein said exposing step comprise the steps of:

exposing a first portion of the photoreactive layer to said partially polarized light while preventing a second portion of the photoreactive layer from being
15 exposed to said light, said first and second portions being different from the one another; and

exposing said second portion of the photoreactive layer to said partially polarized light while preventing said first portion of the photoreactive layer from being
20 exposed to said light.

44. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 37, 38, 39, 40 or 41, wherein said exposing step comprises the steps of:

25 exposing a first portion of the photoreactive

layer to said partially polarized light while preventing a second, third, and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer from being exposed to said light, said first, second, third and fourth portions being different from one another;

exposing said second portion of the photoreactive layer to said partially polarized light while preventing the first, third, and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer from being exposed to said light;

exposing said third portion of the photoreactive layer to said partially polarized light while preventing the first, second, and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer from being exposed to said light; and

exposing said fourth portion of the photoreactive layer to said partially polarized light while preventing the first, second, and third portions of the photoreactive layer from being exposed to said light.

45. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with any one of claims 40 to 44, wherein the liquid crystal material has a pretilt angle greater than 60° .

46. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with any one of claims 40 to 44, wherein the liquid

crystal material has a pretilt angle less than 10° .

47. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with any one of claims 40 to 46, wherein the liquid crystal material includes a negative dielectric anisotropy.

48. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with any one of claims 40 to 46, wherein the liquid crystal material includes a positive dielectric anisotropy.

49. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 42, or claims 45, 46, 47 or 48 when dependent on claim 42, further comprising providing a liquid crystal material adjacent each of said exposed first and second portions of the photoreactive layer, the liquid crystal material adjacent the first portion of the photoreactive layer having a first pretilt and the liquid crystal material adjacent the second portion of the photoreactive layer having a second pretilt different from said first pretilt.

50. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 42, or claim 45, 46, 47 or 48 when dependent on claim 42, further comprising providing a liquid crystal material adjacent each of said exposed first and second portions of the photoreactive layer, the liquid crystal material adjacent the first portion of the photoreactive layer having a first pretilt and the liquid crystal material adjacent the second portion of the photoreactive layer having a second pretilt substantially perpendicular to said first pretilt.

51. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 42, or any one of claims 45 to 50 when dependent on claim 42, further comprising the steps of:

exposing a third portion of the photoreactive layer to said partially polarized light; and

exposing a fourth portion of the photoreactive layer to said partially polarized light, said first, second, third and fourth portions being different from one another.

52. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 51, further comprising providing a liquid crystal material adjacent each of said exposed first, second, third and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer, the liquid crystal material adjacent one of the first, second, third and fourth portions of

photoreactive layer having a pretilt angle direction different than the pretilt angle direction of the liquid crystal material adjacent at least one of another of the first, second, third and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer.

53. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal device in accordance with claim 51, further comprising providing liquid crystal material adjacent each of said exposed first, second, third and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer, the liquid crystal material adjacent one of the first, second, third and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer having a pretilt angle direction substantially perpendicular to the pretilt angle direction of the liquid crystal material adjacent at least one of another of the first, second, third and fourth portions of the photoreactive layer.

54. A liquid crystal device, comprising;
an alignment layer provided on a substrate, said alignment layer including a light sensitive material and having an orientation; and

a liquid crystal material adjacent said alignment layer, said liquid crystal material having molecules having a pretilt, said pretilt having a magnitude

depending on said orientation of the alignment layer.

55. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 54, wherein the alignment layer includes a siloxane based oligomer.

56. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 54, wherein the alignment layer includes a siloxane based polymer.

57. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 54, 55 or 56, wherein said molecules of the liquid crystal material are aligned homogeneously.

58. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 54, 55 or 56, wherein said molecules of the liquid crystal material are aligned homeotropically.

59. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 54, 55, 56, 57 or 58, wherein said molecules of the liquid crystal material are aligned tiltedly.

60. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 54, 55, 56, 57 or 58, wherein said molecules of the liquid crystal material are aligned twistedly.

61. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 54, 55, 56, 57 or 58, wherein said molecules of the liquid crystal material are aligned in a hybrid form.

62. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with any one of claims 54 to 61, further comprising;

another substrate over said liquid crystal material opposite said substrate; and

another alignment layer over said another substrate facing said alignment layer.

63. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with any one of claims 54 to 62, wherein an extent of said orientation depends on an amount of exposure of said alignment layer to light.

64. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with any one of claims 54 to 63, wherein the alignment layer includes polysiloxane cinnamate.

65. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with any one of claims 54 to 64, wherein a first portion of said molecules of the liquid crystal material adjacent to a first portion of said alignment layer is oriented in a first pretilt direction, and a second portion of the molecules of the liquid crystal material adjacent a second portion of the alignment layer is oriented in a second pretilt direction, said first and second portions of the molecules being different from one another, and said first and second portions of the alignment layer being different from one another.

66. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 62, or claim 63, 64 or 65 when dependent on claim 62, wherein said another alignment layer includes a light sensitive material.

67. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 62, or claim 63, 64 or 65 when dependent on claim 62, wherein said another alignment layer includes a polysiloxane cinnamate.

68. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 63, or claim 64, 65, 66 or 67 when dependent on claim 63, wherein the light includes an unpolarized light.

69. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 63, or claim 64, 65, 66 or 67 when dependent on claim 63, wherein the light includes partially polarized light.

70. A liquid crystal display device in accordance with claim 65, or claim 66, 67, 68 or 69 when dependent on claim 65, wherein a third portion of said molecules of the liquid crystal material adjacent a third portion of said alignment layer is oriented in a third pretilt direction, and a fourth portion of said molecules of the liquid crystal material adjacent a fourth portion of said alignment layer is oriented in a fourth pretilt direction, said first, second, third and fourth portions of said molecules being different from one another, said first, second, third and fourth portions of the alignment layer being different from one another.

71. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and/or as illustrated in any one of or any combination of Figs. 4a to 14j of the accompanying drawings.

72. A liquid crystal display device substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and/or as illustrated in any one of or any combination of Figs. 4a to 14j of the accompanying drawings.



Application No: GB 9716576.5
Claims searched: 1 to 53

Examiner: G M Pitchman
Date of search: 10 November 1997

Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.O): G2F (FCT)

Int Cl (Ed.6): G02F 1/1337

Other: EDOC WPI JAPIO INSPEC

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
E, X	GB 2309794 A (LG ELECTRONICS)-see especially page 7 second complete paragraph	1-53
E, X	GB 2309793 A (LG ELECTRONICS)-see figure 3b	1-53
P,X	GB 2301447 A (THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE)-see figure 4 page 7 final paragraph, page 8 final paragraph and page 9 second paragraph	1-53

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step
Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.

& Member of the same patent family

A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
E Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.